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Chair: Ms. Nipomici ..... (Republic of Moldova)

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In the absence of Mr. Djani (Indonesia), Ms. Nipomici (Republic of Moldova), Vice-Chair, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

Agenda item 24: Operational activities for development (*continued*)

(a) Operational activities for development of the United Nations system (*continued*) (A/69/737, A/69/737/Add.1, A/71/63-E/2016/8 and A/71/292/Rev.1)

(b) South-South cooperation for development (*continued*) (A/71/39 and A/71/208)

1. **Mr. Estreme** (Argentina) said that operational activities for development should be further enhanced to help developing countries achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. The United Nations development system, which must adapt to support the development and implementation of public policies aimed at attaining the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, needed to be revitalized through greater coherence and coordination among its entities.

2. Noting that priorities for achieving the Goals were set at the national level, he said that Argentina attached particular emphasis to the principle of national ownership and government leadership. Operational activities must therefore seek to strengthen national capacities in the public and private sectors as well as in civil society. The United Nations development system should use national resources and expertise whenever possible, which would not only help to strengthen national institutional structures, but would also reduce transaction costs and duplication.

3. With regard to the important question of funding for United Nations activities, he said that efforts should be made to increase the core budget, as the financing through it helped to align the system with the priorities established by Member States in accordance with the principle of neutrality.

4. South-South cooperation was an effective tool for developing and implementing policies and actions to address the particular situation of developing countries while taking into account national values. Dialogue on South-South cooperation should continue with a view to promoting cooperation schemes that allowed for mutual reinforcement. It was important to remember, however, the commitment of developed countries to developing countries and that South-South cooperation was not a substitute for North-South cooperation.

5. **Mr. Rai** (Papua New Guinea) said that United Nations funds and programmes must be adequately guided, in particular through the resolution on the quadrennial comprehensive policy review that should take into account new global realities articulated in the 2030 Agenda, the SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA) Pathway (Samoa Pathway) and other relevant plans of action.

6. The capacity-building assistance provided by the United Nations, which made a useful contribution to national efforts to achieve the 2030 Agenda, must be tailored to the national development plans and priorities of each country. Experience in connection with the "Delivering as one" initiative had demonstrated the value added of the coherence, alignment and harmonization of the United Nations system in support of national development efforts. He drew attention in that regard to the United Nations Development Assistance Framework for Papua New Guinea, which was supportive of national development priorities, and should be further strengthened.

7. Core resources, which were vital to the optimal functioning of the United Nations development system, should be increased, particularly given concerns about increasing funding through non-core resources. While Papua New Guinea would welcome a comprehensive mandate for the United Nations development system with a view to achieving the 2030 Agenda, care should be taken not to micromanage the system.

8. **Mr. Adeoye** (Nigeria) said that the report of the Secretary-General regarding implementation of General Assembly resolution 67/226 on the quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system (A/71/63-E/2016/8) highlighted the need for reform to support implementation of the 2030 Agenda. The operational activities for development should be geared towards meeting the needs of developing countries. Nigeria was concerned that funding for those activities had been unpredictable and unreliable, adversely affecting overall programme coherence, efficiencies and transaction costs. A new funding architecture was therefore required to support the United Nations development system in delivering its mandate.

9. His delegation called for a strengthened global partnership for development based on national ownership and leadership of development strategies. The "Delivering as one" initiative, which had served to enhance coherence, coordination, effectiveness and efficiency of the United Nations development system should be maintained, as should the no-one-size-fits-all approach, which allowed individual programme countries to tailor their partnership with the United Nations system in accordance with their development priorities.

10. The decline in official development assistance (ODA) and the global economic slowdown could hinder the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals. Nigeria urged the developed countries to meet their ODA commitments, and highlighted the need for the global community to mobilize additional resources to support the efforts of developing countries. It was advocating a "beyond aid" approach to ensure the sustainability of Africa's development. As a result of the dramatic change in the global development landscape, the United Nations system, Bretton Woods institutions and bilateral donors had been obliged to align their cooperation programmes with national development strategies. Nigeria called for a comprehensive reform of the governance structure of the Bretton Woods institutions to make them more transparent, inclusive and responsive to the needs of developing countries.

11. In order to strengthen further South-South cooperation, which constituted an important platform for developing countries to exchange knowledge and develop their potential, the international community should fully embrace the conceptual framework set out under the Yamoussoukro Consensus. In particular, South-South cooperation should be regarded as complementary to, rather than a substitute for, North-South cooperation. His country had played a key role in the establishment of the Economic Community of West African States and the African Union, and was a strong proponent of South-South cooperation, which it continued to promote at the subregional, regional and global levels. Having highlighted some of the initiatives undertaken by his country in that regard, he called on all States to support complementary mechanisms, including triangular partnerships, and to collaborate with the Busan Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation.

12. **Mr. Alikhani** (Islamic Republic of Iran) said that, as the successful implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals relied on improved performance of the United Nations development system, it was important to ensure that the quadrennial comprehensive policy review focused on aligning the system with the 2030 Agenda. Efforts must also be made to ensure that the governance architecture of the development system was transparent, accountable and responsive to Member States and facilitated system-wide strategic planning.

13. The United Nations development system should continue to provide coherent and integrated support, tailored to the changing needs and priorities of developing countries and respecting the principles of national ownership and leadership. The existing imbalance between core and non-core resources was a matter of serious concern for achieving development objectives.

14. Noting the significant challenges that many developing countries faced in achieving sustainable development, he said that reductions in programme activities would impair development projects and related joint activities in the field. The quality of programme implementation at country level should take precedence over any administrative considerations.

15. South-South cooperation, which played an important role in international cooperation and was a complement to, not a substitute for, North-South cooperation, must be integrated into the operational activities of the United Nations development system. His country would welcome the holding of a conference to mark the fortieth anniversary of the Buenos Aires Plan of Action for Promoting and Implementing Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries, which would help to develop a consolidated approach concerning the role of South-South cooperation in the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals and other internationally agreed development goals.

16. **Mr. Higuchi** (Japan) said that the United Nations development system should adjust its activities in line with the paradigm shift that had taken place on the issue of sustainable development. Appropriate measures must be taken to enable the system to function more effectively and efficiently and continue to be a major player in the development arena, taking

into account the challenges faced and the achievements already made.

17. Broad discussions on the quadrennial comprehensive policy review should continue. Noting that a country-level approach was essential given the need to respect national ownership and tailor assistance to each country's particular situation, he said that Japan looked forward to discussing ways of strengthening the importance of the resident coordinator system. The aim was not to micromanage the United Nations Development Group but to produce a useful, general and easily understood road map based on the broad perspective of the 2030 Agenda.

18. Lastly, Japan would continue to support South-South and triangular cooperation, to which it attached high importance.

19. **Ms. Abdullah** (Malaysia) said that South-South cooperation was a complement to, not a substitute for, North-South cooperation, and its agenda should be determined by the countries of the South. While closer and more focused South-South cooperation should be key in helping developing countries to achieve their development goals, countries of the South should be proactive and not too dependent on assistance.

20. Malaysia welcomed triangular cooperation, which enabled developing countries to share experiences and build capacities. Its technical cooperation programme had already benefited some 31,000 participants from 142 countries, and her country remained committed to continue offering appropriate training courses through the mechanism of triangular cooperation.

21. **Mr. Zamora Rivas** (El Salvador) said that the successful implementation of the 2030 Agenda and other relevant agreements depended, to a large extent, on appropriate interaction between national Governments, which were the main implementing actors, and the United Nations development system. Operational activities should therefore be strengthened with a view to assisting developing countries in achieving the 2030 Agenda, and increased efforts should be made to develop a long-term mechanism and strategy for middle-income countries that took into account indicators other than per capita income.

22. The quadrennial comprehensive policy review would give important guidance to the United Nations development system in adapting to the changing landscape of development cooperation and improving effectiveness and efficiency. The election of a new Secretary-General would also give new impetus to the process. Resident coordinators should have a clearer chain of command and a strengthened role, which would facilitate national ownership of development activities, reduce transaction costs and avoid duplication. The resident coordinator system should, however, not lose its essential elements, namely the association with development and United Nations entities, and knowledge of the situation in the country concerned.

23. His country was concerned that the percentage of core resources for operational activities for development was continuing to decrease. It called for strengthened cooperation and coherence at country level to improve the use of such resources, taking into account the experience of United Nations funds and programmes.

24. Latin America was engaged in South-South cooperation, which helped to promote solidarity among developing countries, and must be viewed as complementary to, rather than as a substitute for, North-South cooperation. His country called on the Secretary-General to provide greater support for South-South cooperation, and encouraged other entities in the United Nations system to make further efforts to include South-South and triangular cooperation in their activities to assist developing countries.

25. Lastly, his country remained firmly committed to the reform of the United Nations system, and particularly welcomed the revitalization of the General Assembly aimed at making the work of that body more expeditious, efficient and effective.

26. **Mr. Biya** (Cameroon) said that the United Nations development system must be coherent, adequately resourced and accountable to Member States. The draft resolution concerning the quadrennial comprehensive policy review should provide a clear and robust road map to address specific problems encountered in recent years. It must be guided by the need to: make poverty eradication a central issue in the operational activities for development; report, in a holistic manner, on system-wide activities and results achieved, including with respect to poverty eradication; strengthen transparency, coherence and accountability of the United Nations development system at the global,

regional and national levels; ensure an appropriate balance between core resources and non-core, earmarked funding; ensure that United Nations activities were aligned with national priorities; and reaffirm the impartiality and multilateral nature of the United Nations development system while ensuring that all parties complied strictly with intergovernmental mandates.

27. He called for appropriate follow-up of paragraph 88 of the 2030 Agenda, set out in General Assembly resolution 70/1, which stressed the importance of system-wide strategic planning, implementation and reporting in order to ensure coherence and integrated support to the implementation of the new Agenda by the United Nations development system.

28. **Mr. Won** Do-Yeon (Republic of Korea) said that the quadrennial comprehensive policy review should be concise and provide a clear vision for the United Nations development system to deliver as one through the presentation of concrete proposals for strengthened collaboration at the level of individual entities and system-wide.

29. Reform of the United Nations development system should be implemented through an incremental approach and be based on an evaluation of the accomplishments, gaps and lessons learned from implementation of the Millennium Development Goals. The focus should be on delivering results in the field rather than on discussions in New York. Efforts to promote system-wide coherence, including through the "Delivering as one" initiative, the introduction of standard operating procedures and the harmonization of the business practices of each United Nations agency, were welcome and should be further refined and integrated into the United Nations development system.

30. Multidimensional approaches were required to address the complex challenges faced by countries in fragile circumstances. Accordingly, planning and analysis should be integrated across each of the three pillars of the Organization's work to address the immediate challenges of conflict and humanitarian needs while tackling the root causes of conflict.

31. **Ms. Ordoñez Fernández** (Colombia) said that the quadrennial comprehensive policy review should provide for the implementation of paragraph 88 of General Assembly resolution 70/1. A short policy review would be acceptable in the current year provided that all entities in the United Nations system understood that it must be followed, and set out policy indications. It should also reflect the universality of the 2030 Agenda, the commitments undertaken by developed countries towards developing countries, and promote coherence across the three dimensions of sustainable development. There should also be recognition of the indivisibility of the Sustainable Development Goals, and that, while the majority were to be implemented at the national level, there were others requiring joint action at the international level.

32. Member States from all regions and with different levels of development had already agreed that business as usual was not an option, and recognized the need to develop a tool beneficial to all that would foster implementation of the 2030 Agenda. It would be useful to consider other options in terms of reporting, including a single system-wide report.

33. **Ms. Elgarf** (Egypt) said that developing countries required particular support in implementing the 2030 Agenda, eradicating poverty, and strengthening productivity and infrastructure. The United Nations development system was an important partner in development efforts, and Egypt welcomed the contribution of the independent team of advisors to the dialogue of the Economic and Social Council on the longer-term positioning of the United Nations development system in the context of the 2030 Agenda.

34. The draft resolution on the quadrennial comprehensive policy review would be relevant not only for the next four years, but until 2030. It outlined ideas and aspirations, and certain elements would be implemented gradually. Predictable financing was essential for increasing the effectiveness of the United Nations development system, and priorities should be those of beneficiary countries and Member States.

35. Noting that development was one of the three pillars of the Organization's work, she said that operational activities must be positioned accordingly. The suggestions regarding structural changes to the development system, while welcome, required further consideration; effectiveness of the system must be the overriding consideration.

36. Lastly, she said that South-South and triangular cooperation, which were important aspects of

international development efforts, must be regarded as complementary to North-South cooperation.

37. **Mr. Chinyonga** (Zambia) said that South-South cooperation should remain complementary to, not a substitute for, North-South cooperation. It constituted an important channel for the exchange of knowledge, skills and resources, resulting in increased volumes of trade, foreign direct investment and greater regional integration. Zambia had benefited from regional integration efforts; its membership in such entities as the Southern African Development Community brought enhanced market access for its products, including to the tripartite free trade area — the largest trading block on the African continent. Furthermore, regional trade policies had resulted in scaled-up agriculture and livestock programmes, capacity-building and technical assistance, and greater support for domestic industry through North-South development cooperation support. A number of projects, which were being implemented with support from cooperating partners, had contributed significantly to job creation and poverty reduction.

38. Zambia had experienced an increase in South-South cooperation from Brazil, China, India, Malaysia, the Republic of Korea and South Africa, among other countries. The main priority programmes were focused on such areas as agriculture, industrial and infrastructure development, trade, tourism and capacity-building. However, challenges existed. In the case of Zambia, there was a need for a strengthened partnership for development cooperation and support, and the possibility of cost-sharing. Other challenges associated with South-South development, such as stringent conditions in accessing lines of credit and competing developmental needs among countries, should be addressed in a timely manner.

39. In closing, he commended the efforts of the United Nations system in promoting South-South cooperation and urged the United Nations regional commissions to continue to play a catalytic role in promoting South-South and triangular cooperation.

40. **Mr. Poudel Chhetri** (Nepal) said that operational activities for development were extremely important for countries in special situations, such as the least developed countries and landlocked developing countries, particularly in the context of the changed development landscape following the adoption of the highly ambitious 2030 Agenda.

41. The development of the quadrennial comprehensive policy review should take into account four challenges. First, the United Nations development system required fundamental change, and its core functions should be clearly defined. Nepal welcomed the acknowledgement in the report of the Secretary-General containing recommendations for consideration during the review (A/71/292/Rev.1) of the need for new ways of thinking, acting and organizing. The important dialogues of the Economic and Social Council held earlier in the year had also recognized that the United Nations development system should prove its effectiveness, efficiency and relevance in the changed context.

42. Second, funding for operational activities for development should be sufficient, assured and predictable, and better aligned with national priorities and plans. It should also support national ownership and leadership. The decline in core resources for the United Nations development system was a concern and must be reversed.

43. Third, a support system was required for countries in special situations. The Istanbul Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2011-2020 and the Vienna Programme of Action for Landlocked Development Countries for the Decade 2014-2024 should be implemented in synergy with the 2030 Agenda.

44. Fourth, vulnerability to climate change and natural disasters and the threat posed by terrorism further exacerbated existing problems in countries in special situations and threatened development gains.

45. Noting the remarkable growth and prosperity enjoyed by some countries of the South, he said that South-South cooperation had huge potential and should complement North-South cooperation, including through regional and subregional organizations. The quadrennial comprehensive policy review process should promote a system-wide approach to South-South and triangular cooperation as a tool for implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

46. **Ms. Mucavi** (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)) said that South-South and triangular cooperation complemented traditional cooperation efforts supporting food security and nutrition, agricultural development and national

implementation of the 2030 Agenda, and its importance was recognized in the FAO programme of work and budget.

47. The FAO partnership with China supported agricultural and rural development in 28 countries. FAO was also working with other key partners including Brazil, South Africa, Turkey and the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela on programmes promoting sustainable agricultural development and food security that also included a social protection component.

48. An increasing number of countries were engaging in South-South cooperation through in-kind contributions. To encourage the involvement of more countries, FAO had recently set up the South-South Cooperation Gateway, which currently consisted of 11 countries and 35 institutions. It had also launched a number of new tools, including a South-South cooperation guide and training packages with e-learning courses. A publication on the FAO South-South cooperation and triangular strategy in action provided further details on initiatives contributing to achievement of the 2030 Agenda.

The meeting rose at 4.15 p.m.